

19



Europäisches Patentamt

European Patent Office

Office européen des brevets

11 Publication number:

**0 276 066  
B1**

12

## EUROPEAN PATENT SPECIFICATION

45 Date of publication of the patent specification:  
27.06.90

51 Int. Cl.<sup>5</sup>: **B26B 21/00, A45D 27/26**

21 Application number: **88300183.6**

22 Date of filing: **11.01.88**

54 **Safety razors.**

30 Priority: **09.01.87 GB 8700518**  
**07.04.87 GB 8708268**

43 Date of publication of application:  
27.07.88 Bulletin 88/30

45 Publication of the grant of the patent:  
27.06.90 Bulletin 90/26

84 Designated Contracting States:  
**AT BE CH DE ES FR GB GR IT LI LU NL SE**

55 References cited:  
**DE-A-1 703 736**  
**US-A-2 460 645**  
**US-A-3 702 026**

73 Proprietor: **THE GILLETTE COMPANY**, Prudential Tower  
Building, Boston Massachusetts 02199(US)

72 Inventor: **Welsh, Norman Clifford**, Balvaig Admoor Lane,  
South End Bradfield Berkshire(GB)  
Inventor: **Oglesby, Oliver David**, 5 Rowan Road, Tadley  
Hampshire(GB)

74 Representative: **Simpson, Ronald Duncan Innes et al**,  
**A.A.Thornton & Co.** Northumberland  
House 303-306 High Holborn, London WC1V 7LE(GB)

Note: Within nine months from the publication of the mention of the grant of the European patent, any person may give notice to the European Patent Office of opposition to the European patent granted. Notice of opposition shall be filed in a written reasoned statement. It shall not be deemed to have been filed until the opposition fee has been paid (Art. 99(1) European patent convention).

## Descripti n

Conventional safety razors have blades mounted in holders of metal or of rigid or semi-rigid plastics material. In US-A 2 460 645 e.g. there is described a safety razor provided with a cushion comprising a wedgeshaped strip of soft, readily compressible, resilient, porous material covering the top surface of the razor.

The present invention represents a substantial departure from conventional practice and resides broadly in a safety razor in which a multi-edged blade means is mounted in a holder of resilient readily deformable material which presents a skin engaging surface surrounding the blade means, different edges of the blade means being displaceable, relative to each other, to follow local deformation of the said surface.

The blade means can, of course, take various forms. In some of the embodiments illustrated below, the blade means comprise one or more flexible foils having, or each having, a plurality of apertures, preferably circular, with sharpened edges. In another embodiment, the blade means comprise individual blade strips presenting a plurality of rectilinear edges, preferably arranged in opposed pairs, the strips being interconnected by flexible straps.

In presently preferred form of the invention, the support comprises a shaped block of plastics foam material. The holder is held by the user in the manner of a small sponge which is simply rubbed, for example with a generally circular motion over the skin surface.

Such a razor is particularly, though not exclusively, designed for use by women, for example in removing hair from the legs whilst bathing. It has been found that, when used in this manner, users report the efficient removal of hair is achieved, but that the sensation is no different, or very little different from rubbing the skin with a bath sponge.

The fact that the holder is readily deformable makes it very easy to grasp, even in soapy bath water, and also enables it to conform easily to the skin contours.

One material which has already proved to be suitable for the holder is a polyethylene foam, which is readily deformable and also produces a pleasant sensation in the skin. Many other materials could, of course, be satisfactorily employed, and it would be possible to use a material having a surface layer of a different material. For example, a very soft rubber could be covered with a "pimpled" surface layer, or with a layer of foam material.

Some forms of razor in accordance with the invention will now be described in detail, by way of example, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Figure 1 is a perspective view of one form of safety razor;

Figure 2 is a perspective view of the holder of the razor of Figure 1;

Figures 3 and 4 are view, corresponding to Figures 1 and 2, of a second form of safety razor;

Figures 5 to 12 are exploded perspective views of some further embodiments of the invention; and

Figures 12A and 12B are scrap-sections on the lines AA and BB in Figure 12.

The razor shown in Figure 1 comprises a holder 1 in the form of a disc of polyethylene foam material, having set in its upper face a blade member 2 in the form of a rectangular foil of conventional blade material, such as stainless steel, having a relatively large number of circular apertures whose edges are sharpened. The foil is set in a flat condition, but is capable of flexing, with the holder, to conform to local skin contours.

As shown in Figure 2, the holder has a rectangular cavity 3 in its upper surface to receive the blade member and some through holes 4 to allow shaving debris to escape through the body of the holder.

The razor shown in Figures 3 and 4 is of the same general construction but comprises a larger block of foam material whose upper, skin engaging surface is generally rectangular in plan and slightly convex in side elevation. The holder is also formed with some lateral holes 6 near the upper end of its side walls, to ensure adequate deformability of the holder.

The razors of Figures 5, 6 and 7 are all generally similar to that of Figure 1, but incorporate blade members of different forms.

In Figure 5, the blade member again comprises a unitary foil 2, but it is extensively slotted at 2A between adjacent rows of apertures to increase the flexibility of the foil.

In each case described above, the holder, particularly in its skin engaging region, is highly deformable and able to conform closely to the skin contours.

Because the foil is highly flexible, it is able to follow local deformations of the holder, so that the sharpened edges of the foil apertures in some regions of the foil are displaced relative to those in other regions.

In Figure 6, two separate foils 2 are provided each comprising a single row of sharp edged apertures, the foils being independently mounted in respective recesses 3 in the holder 1.

The razor of Figure 7 comprises a blade member 2 presenting a plurality of rectilinear blade edges. Over the major part of its length, the blade member comprises three narrow blade strips 7, 8 and 9 held in spaced parallel relation by thin, flexible connecting straps 11. The outer strips 7 and 9 have sharpened inner edges 7A, 9A, facing the respective sharpened edges 8A, 8B of the central strip 8.

At each end of the blade member there is provided a spaced pair of blade strips 12 having their inner, adjacent edges sharpened, these strips extending transversely to the length of the blade strips 7, 8 and 9.

With this arrangement, the blade member as a whole is highly flexible, so that different blade edges and different regions of individual blade edges are readily displaceable relative to each other. The connecting straps 11 also act as skin guards.

The razor shown in Figure 8 comprises a generally cylindrical block body 1 having set into its end

face a plurality of radially disposed foils 2 each presenting a single row of sharp edged apertures. One foil is shown in exploded perspective view for the sake of clarity.

Figure 9 illustrates a razor generally similar in form to that of Fig. 3, but whereas the latter assumes some form of bonding of the foil directly to the holder 1, the razor of Fig. 9 employs a separate frame 13 for mounting the foil on the holder. The frame is of moulded plastics construction and is highly flexible. It is of generally rectangular shape, formed on its inner periphery with inwardly directed slots 14 to receive the margins of the foil. At its opposite ends the frame has depending legs 16 which pass downwardly through the end holes 4, the lower ends of the legs being captured by slotted retainers 17 which are inserted through the end holes 6. The side members of the frame having depending prongs 18 which are pushed into the foam and body at the bottom of cavity 3.

Figure 10 shows a further variant, in which the holder comprises a lower body portion 1A made up from two moulded casing halves of relatively rigid plastics material. Transverse internal walls 19 provide a support for an upper body portion 1B of readily deformable foam material. The foil 2 and frame 13 are as shown in Fig. 9 but in this case the legs 16 clip into slots 21 formed in the walls 19.

The razor of Figure 11 is of generally cylindrical form, and comprises a relatively rigid lower body portion 1A, an upper body portion 1B of readily deformable material and a plurality of separate foils 2 set in the portion 1B. The foils are of hexagonal form, each having a number of sharp edged apertures. The portion 1B is of inverted cup-shape and has a number of channel-section brackets 22 depending from its main wall surface to engage in slots formed in upstanding support legs 23 integral with the body portion 1A. The cylindrical sidewall of the portion 1B is formed with recesses 24 which serve both to increase the flexibility of the portion and also to provide large passages for the clearance of the shaving debris. Flexibility is further enhanced by the provision of radial slots 26 in the upper surface of the portion 1B.

The razor illustrated in Fig. 12 is generally similar in form to that of Fig. 10 but it incorporates an additional component in the form of a rectangular frame 28 surrounding the foil and made of a material which supplies a skin conditioning agent, such as a lubricant or a moisturizer. More specifically, the frame may comprise a solid mixture of a hydrophobic polymer and a hydrophilic polymer, the hydrophilic polymer dissolving out of the mixture when wetted during shaving. The hydrophobic polymer may be polystyrene and the hydrophilic material may be polyethylene oxide, which acts as a lubricant between the skin and the blade member.

As best seen in Figs. 12A and 12B, which are scrap sections on the lines AA and BB in Fig. 12, the foil 2 is again held by a frame 13 whose legs 16 extend downwardly through recesses in the foam body portion 1B, and clip into recesses 21 in the rigid, lower body portion 1A. The frame 13 also has depending projections 29 which engage in apertured legs 31 in-

tegral with the frame 28 in order to clamp the latter in position.

The solid mixture material could, of course, alternatively be provided in other forms, such as in discrete elements distributed about the area occupied by blade means.

Various combinations of details of the individual embodiments described above will, of course, be possible within the scope of the invention.

Reverting to the question of the nature of the holder material, we have employed the following procedure to establish whether a given material has a suitable degree of flexibility.

A horizontal round bar, 40mm. long and 4.75mm. diameter is pressed into a block material 65mm. by 35mm. and 20mm. thick. The block is positioned on a flat anvil with the horizontal bar centred on the centre of the block with its length parallel to the long axis of the block. The bar is advanced into the block at the rate of 40mm./min to a maximum depth of 2.5mm. and the rate of increase in the load is recorded. The deform ability is then quoted as the rate of increase in Newtons/mm.

We have found that most materials suitable for the purpose have a resultant value in the range of 1.5 to 10 Newtons/mm. and preferably in the range of 4 to 7 Newtons/mm.

As previously stated, polyethylene foam may be employed, but various thermo-plastic, cross-linked or thermo-setting materials could be used, such as polyurethane, silicone rubber, ethyl vinyl acetate, polyvinyl chloride, polyester, polyether or blends of such materials.

## Claims

1. A safety razor in which a multi-edged blade means (2) is mounted in a holder (1) of resilient readily deformable material which presents a skin engaging surface surrounding the blade means, different edges of the blade means (2) being displaceable, relative to each other, to follow local deformation of the said surface.

2. A razor according to claim 1, wherein the holder (1) comprises a shaped block of plastics foam material.

3. A razor according to claim 1, wherein the holder (1) comprises a body of a soft material covered by a layer of a different material which forms the said surface.

4. A razor according to claim 1, 2 or 3, wherein the readily deformable material which forms the skin engaging surface is a polyethylene foam.

5. A razor according to any preceding claim, wherein the holder (1) is formed with a cavity (3) in which the blade means (2) is housed and with through holes (4) connecting the cavity (3) with the outside of the holder (1) to facilitate the escape of the shaving debris.

6. A razor according to any preceding claim, wherein the blade means (2) comprises a thin flexible metal foil having a plurality of apertures whose edges are sharpened to constitute the individual said edges of the blade means (2).

7. A razor according to claim 6, wherein the blade means (2) consists of a single foil of generally rectangular form.

8. A razor according to claim 6, wherein the blade means (2) consists of a unitary foil member having parallel rows of said apertures, and wherein the foil is slotted, between adjacent rows of apertures, to increase the flexibility of the foil.

9. A razor according to claim 6, wherein the blade means (2) comprises a plurality of individual foil members, each having a plurality of said apertures, and being mounted independently in the holder.

10. A razor according to claim 9, wherein each foil member is of elongate form, having a single row of said apertures.

11. A razor according to claim 10, wherein the said foil members are set parallel with each other in the holder.

12. A razor according to claim 10 in which the said foil members are set to extend radially from a central region of the holder.

13. A razor according to claim 9, wherein the foil members are each of polygonal form.

14. A razor according to claim 6 or 7, further comprising a flexible frame member (13) for receiving the foil, the frame being firmly secured to the holder.

15. A razor according to any one of claims 1 to 5, wherein the blade means comprises a plurality of rectilinear blade strips (7, 9) each having at least one rectilinear cutting edges, the strips being individually flexible and bodily displaceable relative to each other.

16. A razor according to any preceding claim, wherein the said holder (7B) is mounted on a body member (7A) of relatively rigid construction.

#### Patentansprüche

1. Rasierapparat, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß eine mehrschneidige Klingenanordnung (2) in einem Halter (1) aus einem elastischen, leicht verformbaren Werkstoff befestigt ist, der eine Hautanlagefläche aufweist, die die Klingenanordnung umgibt, und das verschiedene Schnelden der Klingenanordnung (2) relativ zueinander verschiebbar sind, um einer örtlichen Verformung der Hautanlagefläche zu folgen.

2. Rasierapparat nach Anspruch 1, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß der Halter (1) einen Formblock aus Kunststoffschäumwerkstoff umfaßt.

3. Rasierapparat nach Anspruch 1, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß der Halter (1) einen Körper aus weichem Werkstoff umfaßt, der durch eine Schicht aus einem unterschiedlichen Werkstoff abgedeckt ist, die die Hautanlagefläche bildet.

4. Rasierapparat nach Anspruch 1, 2 oder 3, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß der leicht verformbare Werkstoff, der die Hautanlagefläche bildet, ein Polyethylenschäumstoff ist.

5. Rasierapparat nach einem der vorausgehenden Ansprüche, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß der Halter (1) mit einem Hohlraum (3) ausgebildet ist, in dem die Klingenanordnung (2) untergebracht ist, und mit Durchtrittsöffnungen (4), die den Hohlraum

mit der Außenseite des Halters (1) verbinden, um den Austritt von Rasierabfall zu erleichtern.

6. Rasierapparat nach irgendeinem der vorausgehenden Ansprüche, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß die Klingenanordnung (2) ein dünnes biegsames Metallplättchen umfaßt, das eine Mehrzahl Öffnungen aufweist, wenn Schnelden geschärft sind, um die einzelnen Schnelden der Klingenanordnung (2) zu bilden.

7. Rasierapparat nach Anspruch 6, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß die Klingenanordnung (2) aus einem einzigen Plättchen mit im wesentlichen Rechteckform besteht.

8. Rasierapparat nach Anspruch 6, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß die Klingenanordnung (2) aus einem einheitlichen Plättchenelement besteht, das parallele Reihen der Öffnungen aufweist und daß das Plättchen zwischen benachbarten Reihen von Öffnungen geschlitzt ist, um die Biegsamkeit des Plättchens zu erhöhen.

9. Rasierapparat nach Anspruch 6, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß die Klingenanordnung (2) eine Anzahl einzelner Plättchenelemente umfaßt, wovon jedes eine Anzahl Öffnungen aufweist und unabhängig im Halter befestigt ist.

10. Rasierapparat nach Anspruch 9, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß jedes Plättchenelement ähnliche Form hat und eine einzige Reihe Öffnungen.

11. Rasierapparat nach Anspruch 10, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß die Plättchenelemente parallel zueinander im Halter eingesetzt sind.

12. Rasierapparat nach Anspruch 10, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß die Plättchenelemente derart eingesetzt sind, daß sie sich radial von einem mittigen Bereich des Halters wegerstrecken.

13. Rasierapparat nach Anspruch 9, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß die Plättchenelemente jeweils die Form eines Vielecks haben.

14. Rasierapparat nach Anspruch 6 oder 7, ferner gekennzeichnet durch ein biegsames Rahmenelement (13) zur Aufnahme des Plättchens, wobei der Rahmen fest am Halter befestigt ist.

15. Rasierapparat nach einem der Ansprüche 1 bis 5, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß die Klingenanordnung eine Anzahl geradliniger Klingestreifen (7, 9) umfaßt und jeder mindestens eine geradlinige Schneidkante hat, die Streifen einzeln biegsam und als Körper relativ zueinander verschiebbar sind.

16. Rasierapparat nach einem der vorausgehenden Ansprüche, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß der Halter (7B) an einem Körperteil (7A) mit verhältnismäßig starrem Aufbau befestigt ist.

#### Revendications

1. Rasoir de sûreté dans lequel un dispositif (2) à lames à plusieurs bords de coupe est monté dans un organe de maintien (1) d'un matériau élastique facilement déformable qui présente une surface de contact avec la peau entourant le dispositif à lames, les différents bords du dispositif (2) à lames pouvant être déplacés les uns par rapport aux autres afin qu'ils suivent la déformation locale de ladite surface.

2. Rasoir selon la revendication 1, dans lequel l'organe de maintien (1) est un bloc de mousse de matière plastique de forme convenable.

3. Rasoir selon la revendication 1, dans lequel l'organe de maintien (1) est un corps d'un matériau mou recouvert d'une couche d'un matériau différent qui forme ladite surface.

4. Rasoir selon la revendication 1, 2 ou 3, dans lequel le matériau facilement déformable qui forme la surface de contact avec la peau est une mousse de polyéthylène.

5. Rasoir selon l'une quelconque des revendications précédentes, dans lequel l'organe de maintien (1) a une cavité (3) dans laquelle est logé le dispositif à lames (2) et des trous débouchants (4) reliant la cavité (3) à l'extérieur de l'organe de maintien (1) afin que la sortie des débris de rasage soit facilitée.

6. Rasoir selon l'une quelconque des revendications précédentes, dans lequel le dispositif à lames (2) comporte une mince feuille flexible de métal ayant plusieurs ouvertures dont les bords sont alésés afin qu'ils constituent les bords individuels du dispositif à lames (2).

7. Rasoir selon la revendication 6, dans lequel le dispositif à lames (2) est formé d'une seule feuille de forme générale rectangulaire.

8. Rasoir selon la revendication 6, dans lequel le dispositif à lames (2) est formé d'un organe en une seule pièce constitué d'une feuille ayant des rangées parallèles d'ouvertures, et la feuille est fendue, entre les rangées adjacentes d'ouvertures, afin que sa flexibilité soit accrue.

9. Rasoir selon la revendication 6, dans lequel le dispositif à lames (2) comporte plusieurs organes sous forme de feuilles individuelles, ayant chacun plusieurs ouvertures et montés indépendamment dans l'organe de maintien.

10. Rasoir selon la revendication 9, dans lequel chaque organe sous forme d'une feuille a une configuration allongée et comporte une seule rangée d'ouvertures.

11. Rasoir selon la revendication 10, dans lequel les organes sous forme de feuilles sont disposés parallèlement les uns aux autres dans l'organe de maintien.

12. Rasoir selon la revendication 10, dans lequel les organes en forme de feuilles sont placés afin qu'ils soient disposés radialement à partir d'une région centrale de l'organe de maintien.

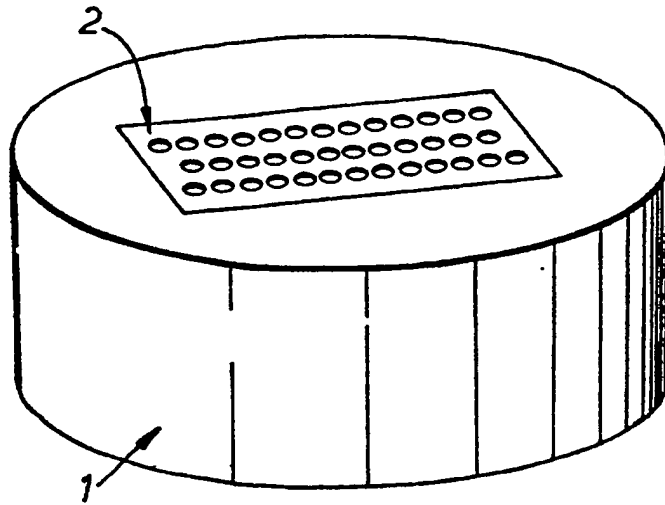
13. Rasoir selon la revendication 9, dans lequel les organes sous forme de feuilles ont chacun une forme polygonale.

14. Rasoir selon la revendication 6 ou 7, comprenant en outre un cadre flexible (13) destiné à loger la feuille, le cadre étant fermement retenu sur l'organe de maintien.

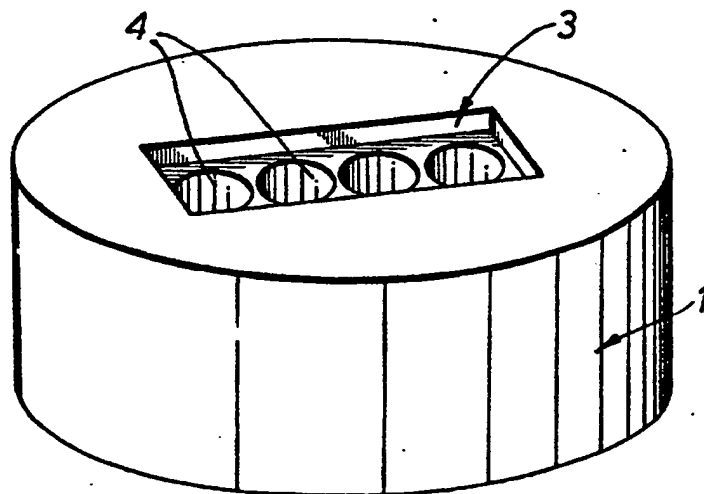
15. Rasoir selon l'une quelconque des revendications 1 à 5, dans lequel le dispositif à lames comporte plusieurs bandes rectilignes (7, 9) à lames ayant chacune au moins un bord rectiligne de coupe, les bandes étant individuellement flexibles et pouvant être déplacées globalement les unes par rapport aux autres.

16. Rasoir selon l'une quelconque des revendica-

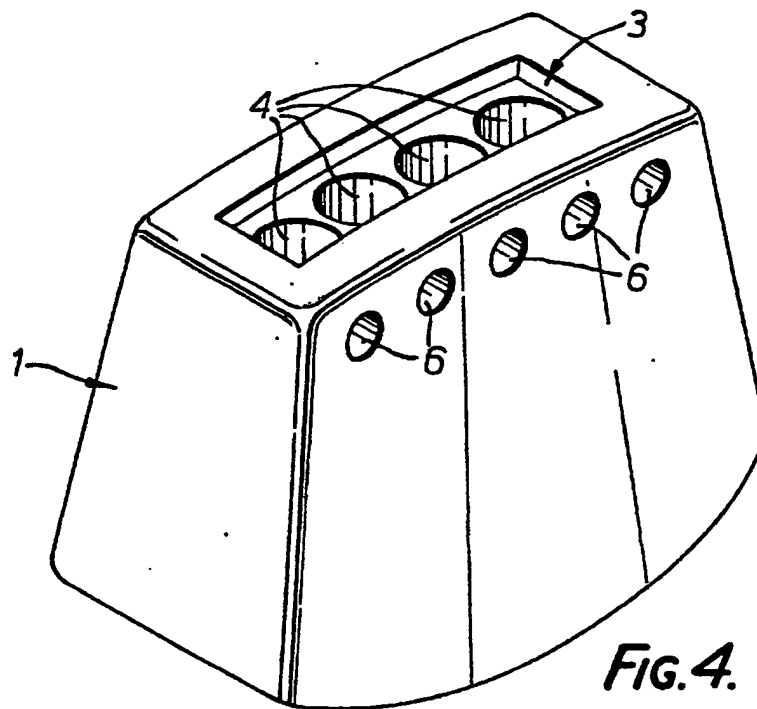
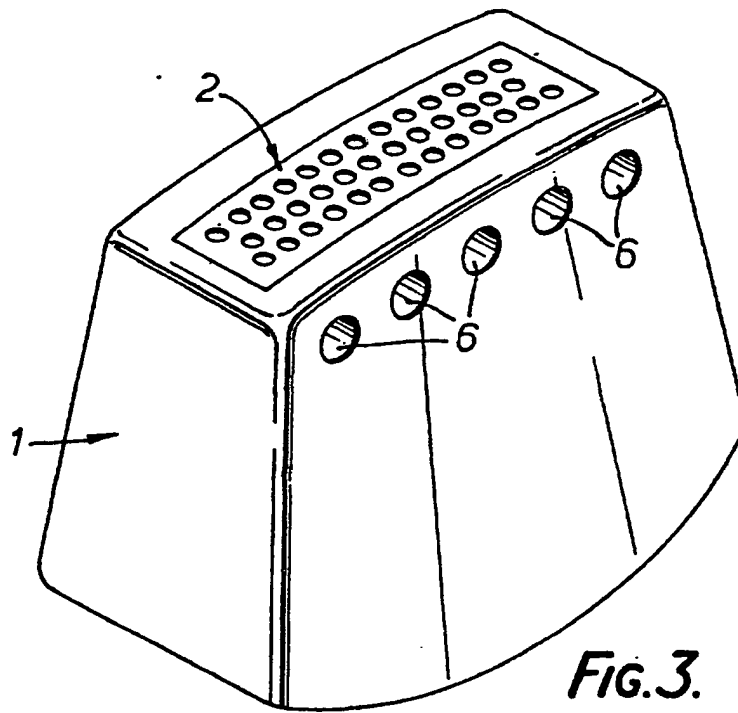
tions précédentes, dans lequel l'organe de maintien (7B) est monté sur un corps (7A) de construction relativement rigide.

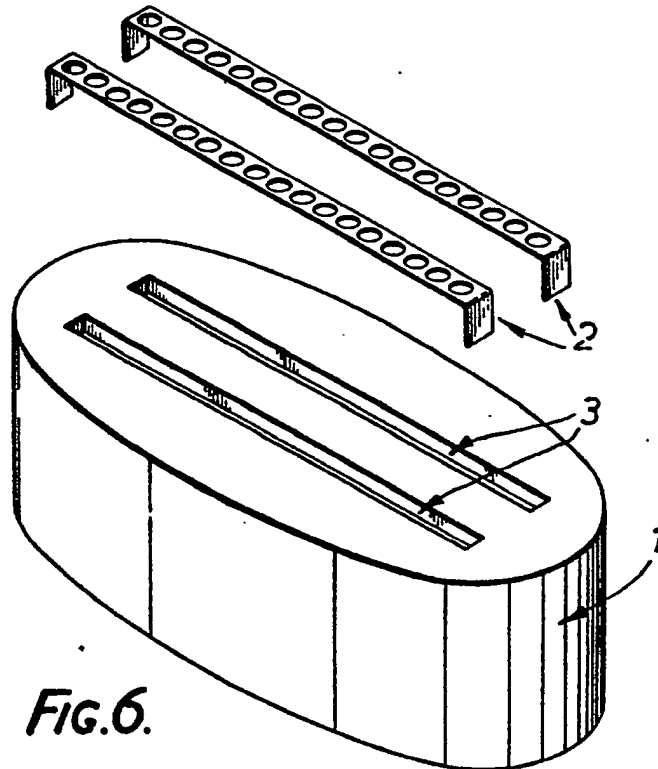
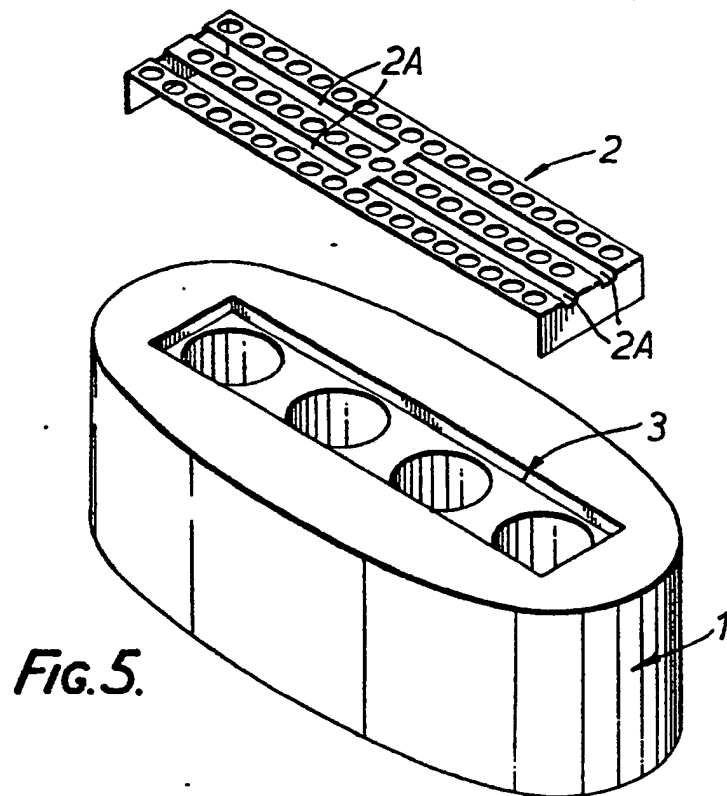


**FIG. 1.**

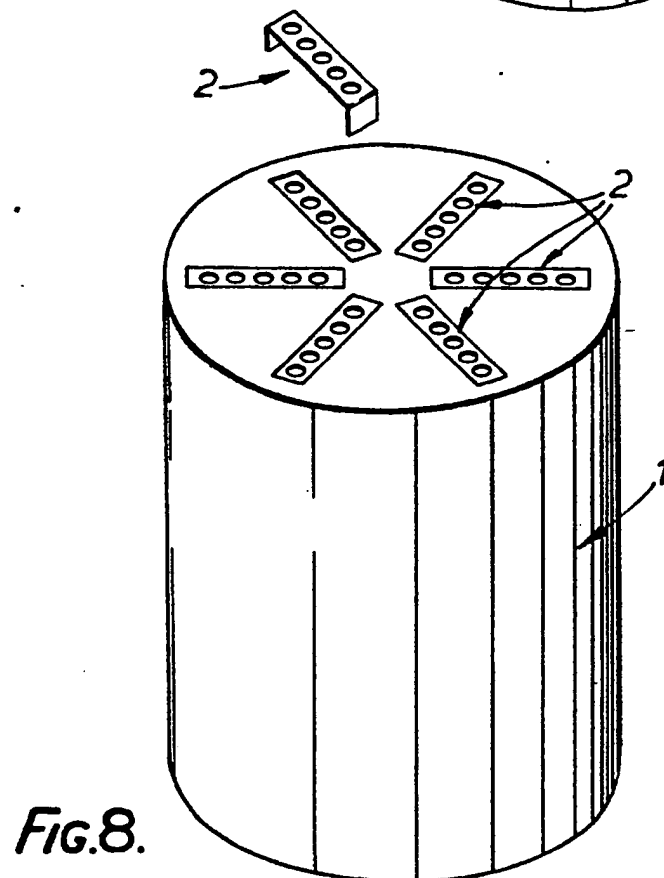
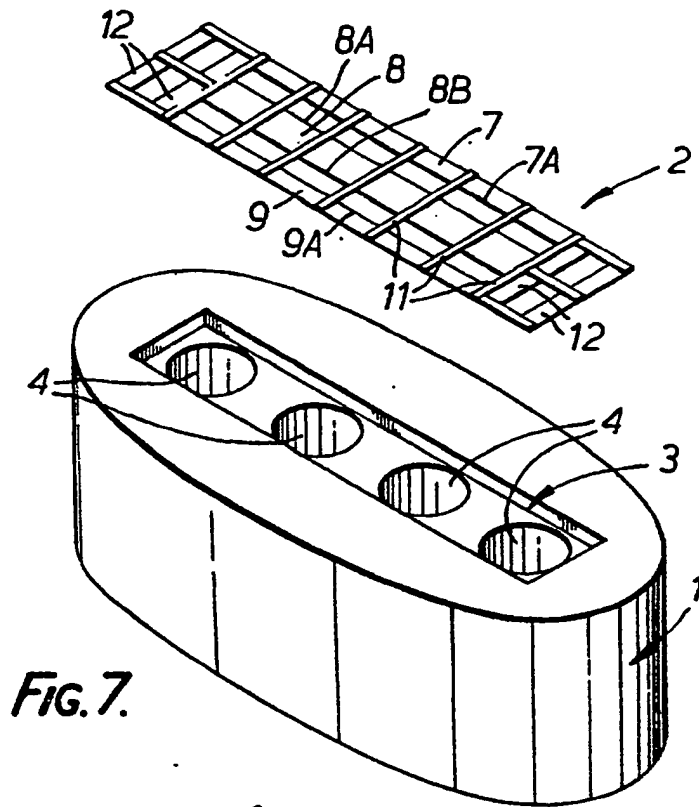


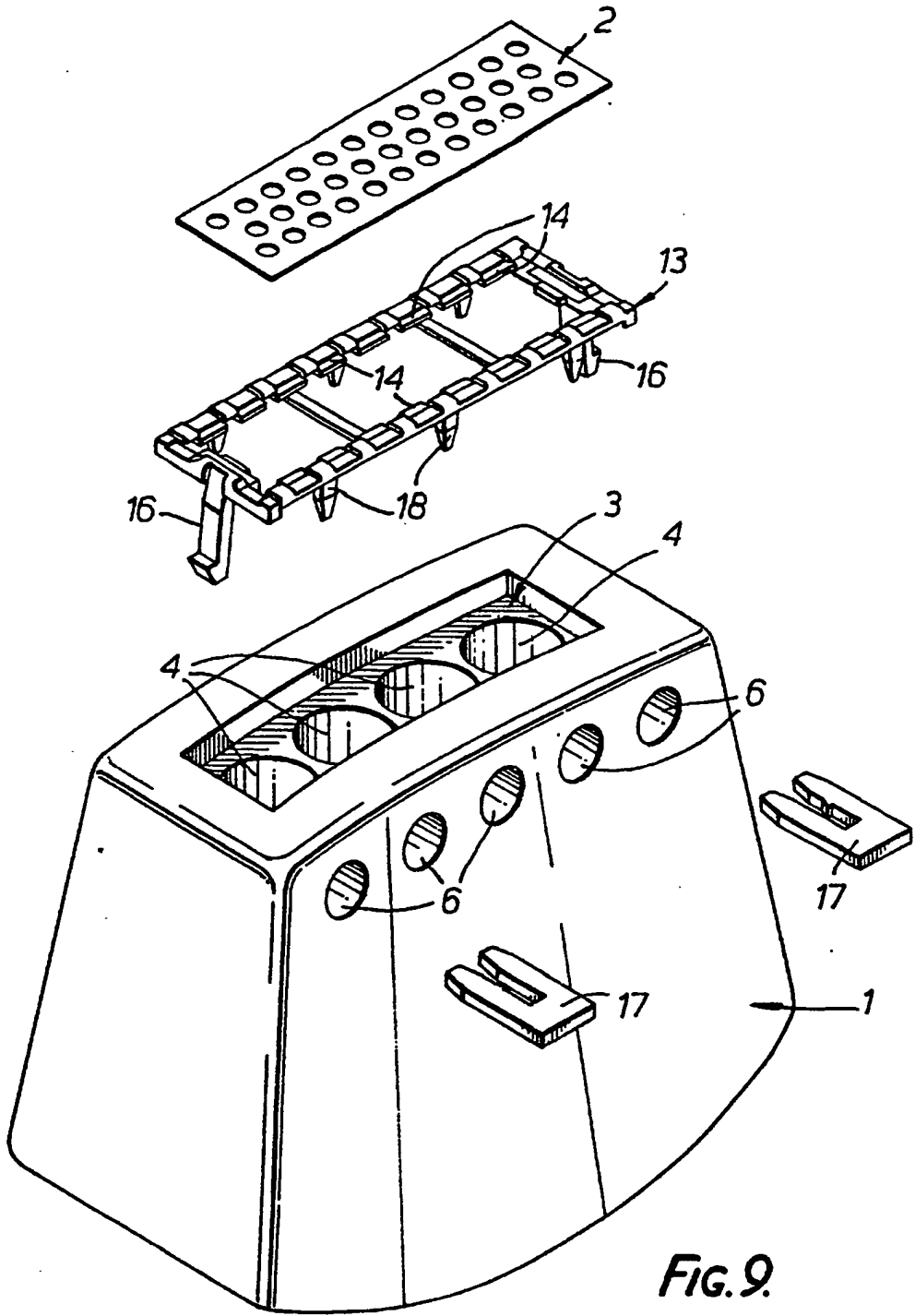
**FIG. 2.**











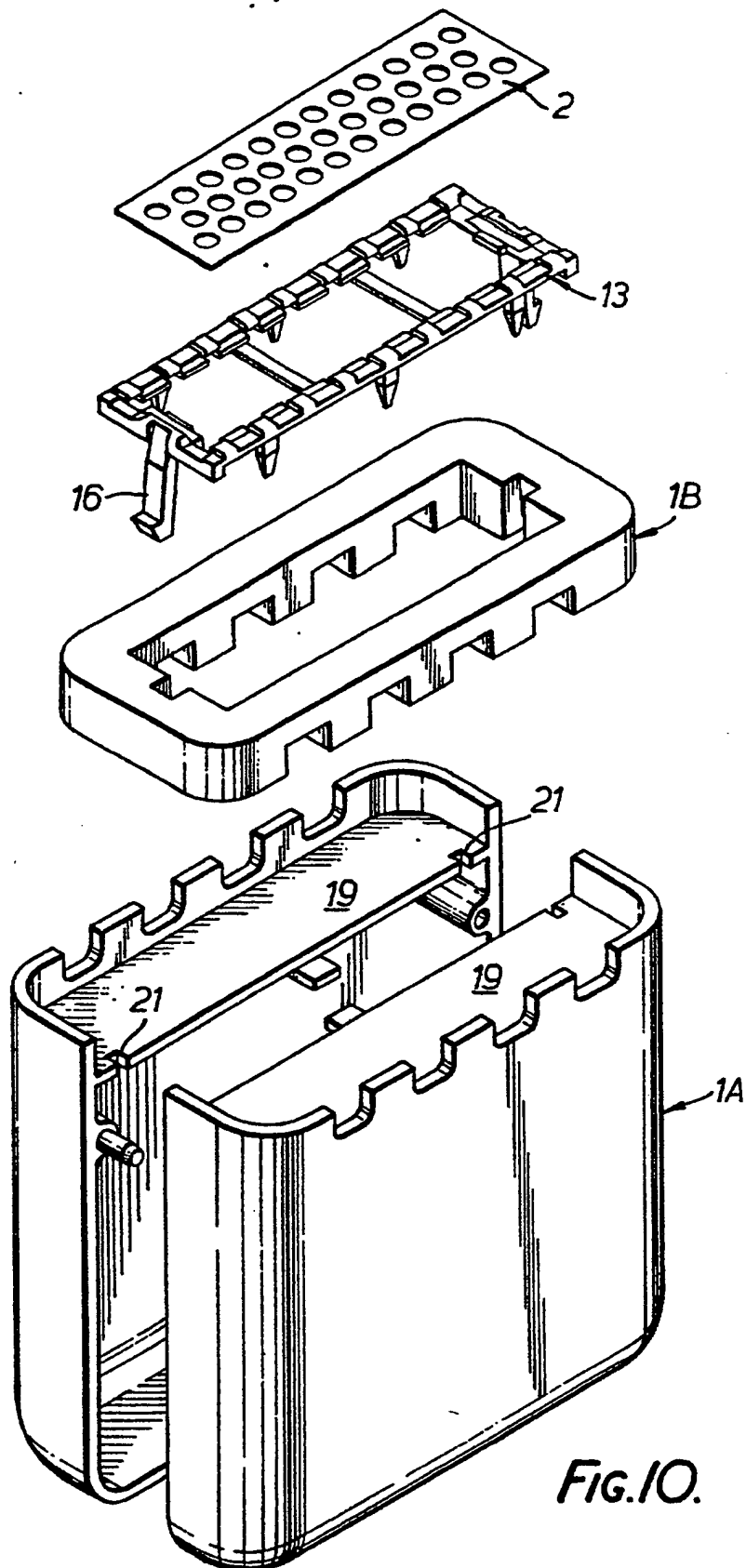


Fig.10.

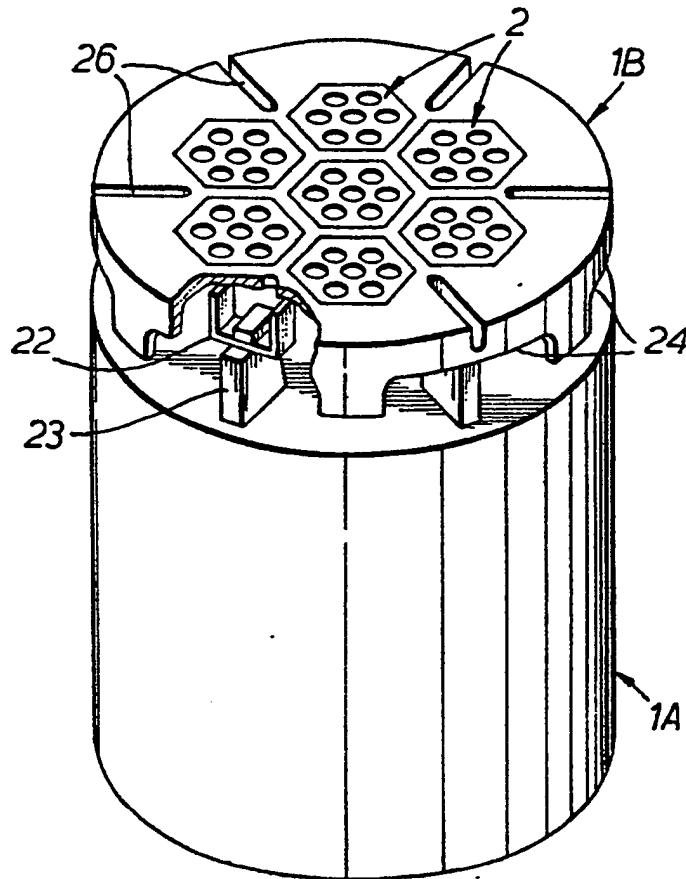


FIG. II.

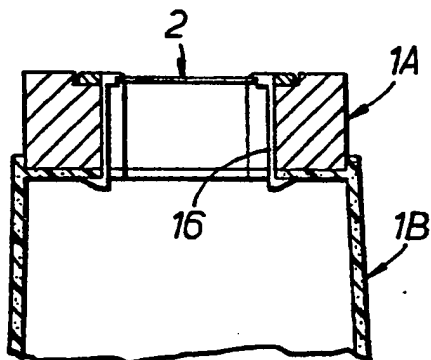


FIG. I2A.

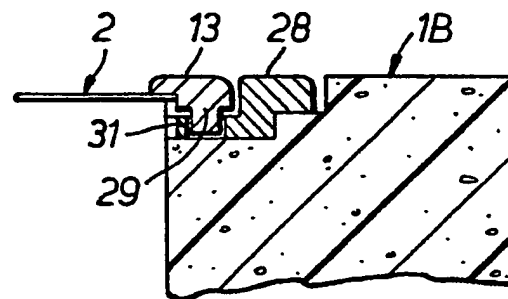


FIG. I2B.

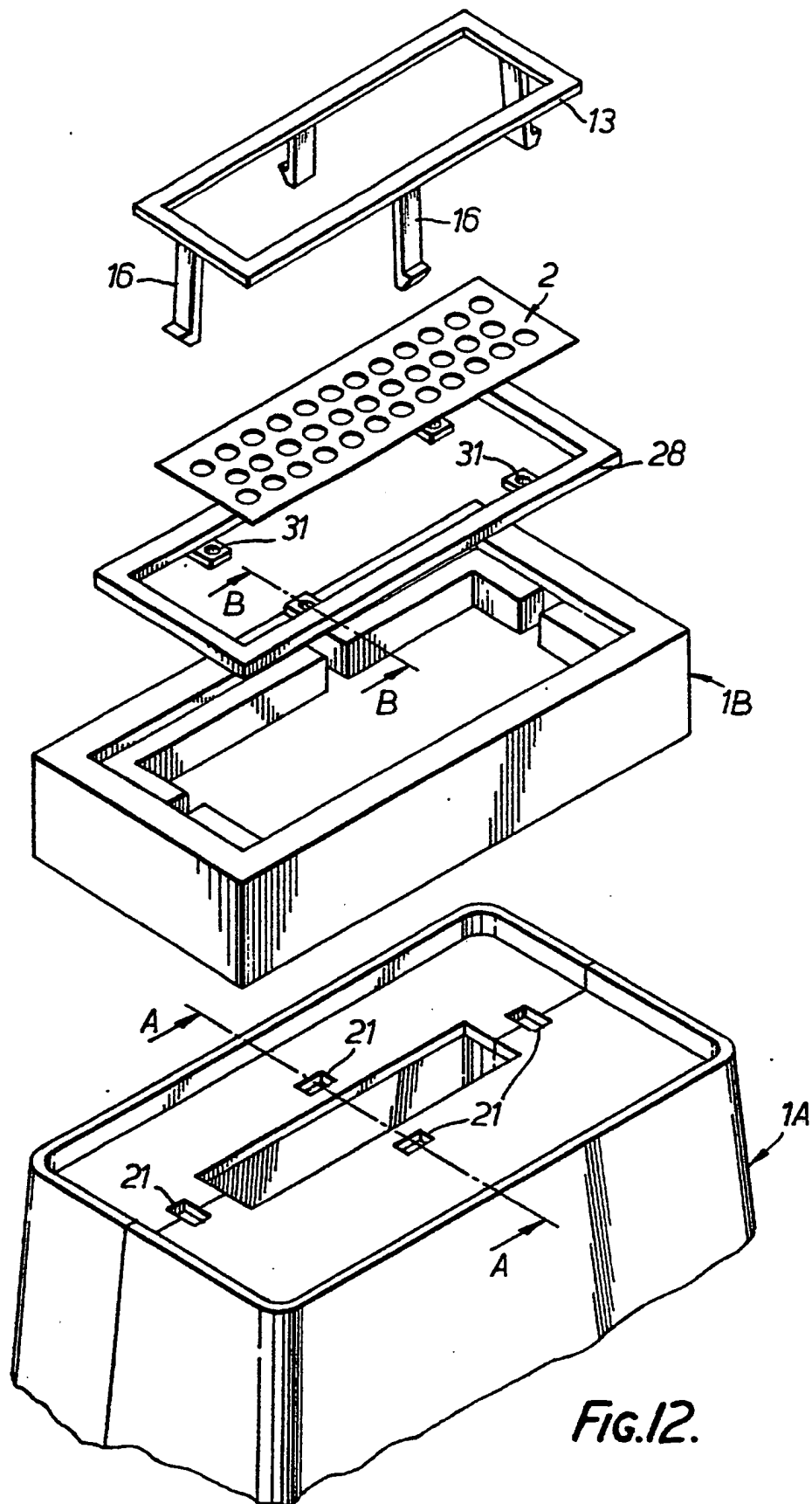


FIG. 12.